

Brown Knapweed

(*Centaurea jacea* L.)

Family: Asteraceae (Compositae)

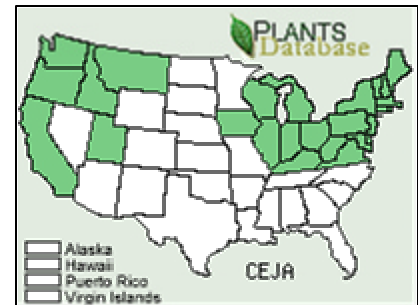
Description: Brown knapweed is a perennial plant with a woody root crown that grows 20 to 48 inches tall, branching near the top. The branches have egg-shaped or lance-shaped undivided leaves that become progressively smaller up the stem. The stem is ridged and sometimes purple-striped. The 3/4-to-one inch, light to dark brown heads are found at the ends of the branches. The somewhat hairy bracts are wider at the tips with broad, thin, papery margins. The center of the bracts is dark brown. The bract tips overlap the base of nearby bracts. The flowers, which bloom from July to October, are rose to purple but rarely white. Brown knapweed reproduces from seeds and from the woody root crown.



Geographical Distribution: Brown knapweed is native to Eurasia and found in the US in the states shaded green on the map.

Habitat: Brown knapweed grows in grasslands, open woods, meadows, pastures, woodland clearings, and in cutover areas of forest. The species can tolerate partial shade.

Control: Brown knapweed is an aggressive and invasive perennial. Control methods include:



- **Manual:** Pull or dig up small infestations including the entire root if possible.
- **Mechanical:** Plants that are periodically mowed will generally continue to flower and produce seed on shorter plants below the mower blade height. Provide a healthy cover crop to help prevent knapweed from re-establishing.
- **Chemical:** Glyphosate, picloram, 2, 4-D, and clopyralid have all been used on knapweeds.
- **Biocontrol:** Gall flies, (*Urophora affinis* and *Urophora quadrifasciata*) feed on the developing seed heads and can dramatically reduce seed production. These insects co-exist well.



References: www.nwcb.wa.gov/weed_info/browknknapweed.html, <http://plants.usda.gov>, <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/LANDS/Weeds/pdf/knapweed-control.pdf>

